

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3-7, 10, 11, 13 and 14 are pending in the present application. Claims 4 and 5 were previously withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 6, 7 10, 11, 13 and 14 have been amended. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

**I. Claim Rejections****A. Claims 1-3, 6, 7, 10 and 13**

Claims 1-3, 6, 7, 10, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,190,751 to Sylvester ("Sylvester") in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,383,570 to Sellew ("Sellew") in view of U.S. Patent No. 791,552 to Hance ("Hance"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections and submits that these claims, as amended, are patentably distinct over Sylvester, Sellew and Hance, taken alone or in combination as proposed by the Examiner.

The Patent Office has rejected claims 1-3, 6, 7, 10 and 13 on the grounds that Sylvester discloses a gasket comprising a sheet of flexible material having an orifice and that Sellew disclosure of a continuous, uniform, circular seal spanning the entire circumference of the annular gasket provides a "teaching of a lip at any location where improved sealing is necessary." The Examiner further asserted that the claim limitation directed to "providing the lip(s) only at the first surface of the first side (i.e., no lip at the second surface) is considered obvious in a situation where that is the only location there may be imperfections."

Applicant respectfully disagrees with both of these assertions. First, Sellew does not disclose, teach or suggest the selective use of a lip spanning only a portion of the circumference of the gasket. Sellew expressly discloses the use of a continuous, uniform, concentric ridge to provide an improved sealing seat for flat synthetic gaskets which lack the

necessary flexibility to provide a seal for a surface having slight imperfections because “the gasket will not be properly compressed for sealing.” Sellew at col. 2, lns. 3-33. Sellew expressly discloses using a concentric ridge as the sealing component for the entire circumference of the gasket. A person of ordinary skill in the art would readily appreciate that the use of a ridge spanning only a portion of the circumference of the annular gasket in Sellew would leave the remaining portion of the gasket without a proper sealing surface because, as expressly disclosed in Sellew, the gasket itself lacks the necessary flexibility to provide a seal.

Second, the Examiner’s assertion that “providing the lip(s) only at the first surface of the first side (i.e., no lip at the second surface) is considered obvious in a situation where that is the only location there may be imperfections” mischaracterizes the present invention. Applicant’s invention is not directed to providing a seal only along the portion of the flexible material where the lips are located. To the contrary, applicants invention is directed to a seal extending along the entire circumference or perimeter of the internal orifice formed in the sheet of flexible material. To clarify this point, applicant has amended the pending claims to specify that the lip(s) provide “a point of compression against the abutting surface of the optical unit and produces a compressive force between the optical unit and the surface of the second portion of the first side of the sheet of flexible material” comprising no lip. Neither Sylvester, Sellew nor Hance, taken along or together, disclose, teach or suggest the use of a lip or ridge along only a portion of the circumference or perimeter of the gasket orifice to provide “a point of compression against the abutting surface of the optical unit and produces a compressive force between the optical unit and the surface of the second portion of the first side of the sheet of flexible material” where the second portion comprises no lip.

The Examiner has also stated that the claim language was met “even if a bead were applied to the entire perimeter/circumference of Sylvester.” This rejection was based on the Examiner’s assertion that the claims could be broadly interpreted such that a “portion” of the first side of the sheet of flexible material may have two separate “surfaces,” one surface having a lip and another surface having no lip. Applicant has amended the claims to eliminate this apparent ambiguity. Specifically, the claims have been amended to state that each of the first, second and central portions have a surface which extends from the inner perimeter to the outer perimeter of the sheet of flexible material. As presently amended, none of the first, second and central portions are susceptible to being interpreted as having a section considered a “first surface” having a lip and a “second surface” having no lip. Each of these portions are defined as a surface which extends from the inner perimeter to the outer perimeter of the sheet of flexible material.

**B. Claims 11 and 14**

Claims 11 and 14 were rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sylvester in view of Sellw in view of Hance as applied to claims 10 and 13, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,090,713 to Johnson (“Johnson”). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections and submits that these claims, as amended, are patentably distinct over Sylvester, Sellw, Hance and Johnson for the same reasons set forth above in response to the rejections of claims 1-3, 6, 7, 10 and 13.

**CONCLUSION**

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance.

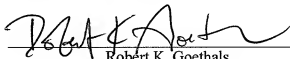
**AUTHORIZATION**

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 50-4827, Order No. 1004286-818US.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Dated: April 17, 2009

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